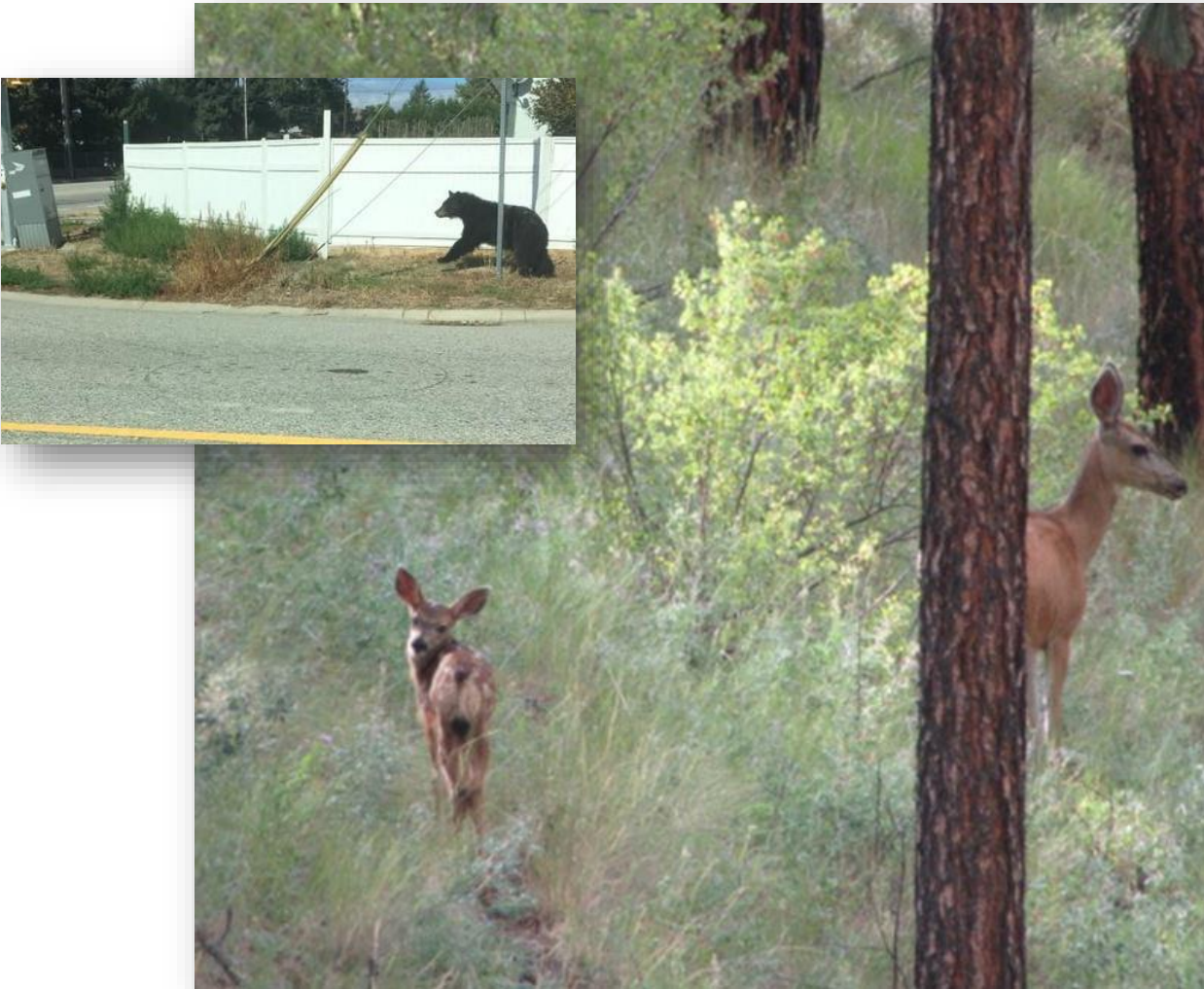


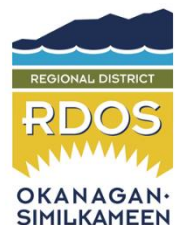
WildSafeBC Year End Report 2016

Regional District of Okanagan-Similkameen

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Executive Summary

Nov 1, 2016

In 2016, The RDOS WildSafeBC Program focus continued on the next 'hot spots' in the region; Princeton and Summerland. They have both been long standing areas for human-bear conflict and wildlife issues.

In the Town of Princeton a much more in-depth program took place with the additional funding from Princeton. This enabled a more thorough face-to-face engagement of residents. As a result, Princeton council received both a Wildlife Hazard Assessment and Conflict Management Plan draft(s) to review. This information complete with recommendations will assist the Town to move towards reducing human-wildlife conflict.

Summerland also received more program hours with several events, public talks, and door-to-door direct contact with residents. Specifically, bear and cougar were the main focus species for this summer.

For the second year in a row, the RDOS employed a Canada Summer Jobs Student to assist with outreach in the 2016 season. Ms. Savanna Maddock was hired in May, trained by the BC Conservation Foundation and worked throughout the region until August 26th. She did an excellent job, which allowed the RDOS WildSafeBC Community Coordinator to deal with the daily issues, calls, media and overall program management.

Naramata celebrated its Second anniversary of being Bear Smart - June 23rd 2016. A small second anniversary celebration was held at the community farmer's market where goody bags were given away with one special bag containing a gift certificate to a local restaurant.

The 2016 program outreach directly engaged with close to 1,000 people throughout the region. These totals do not include media coverage, regular phone calls or resident engagement generated through the RDOS office.



Figure 1. Naramata- 2nd anniversary celebration as a bear smart community

Highlights from the 2016 Season

Canada Summer Jobs Student – Savanna Maddock

In early May, Savanna Maddock was hired as a WildSafeBC summer student. After attending training at Kamloops, she started working in the RDOS/ Princeton area. Princeton provided additional resources to offset mileage and increase the amount of hours in the contract, which increased her work period from 9 to 16 weeks. Savanna conducted outreach by attending farmers markets, event booths, presenting kids talks at Libraries and the SPCA kids camp and by door-to-door canvassing in hot spot areas specifically in Princeton, Summerland and once in Kaleden. Savanna produced a Wildlife hazard Assessment and Wildlife Conflict Management Plan for Princeton. This involved gathering information from locals as well as first hand observation and the mapping the data and summarizing her findings into a report. Savanna also conducted a corridor study on HWY 97 south from the Kaleden junction to Osoyoos. This required her to map barriers, fence lines, wildlife crossings, dead carcasses and pinch points for wildlife and property owners along that corridor.



Figure 2. Summer student Savanna Maddock

Princeton

Princeton, at the far western edge of the region was a high priority for a more direct campaign in 2016. The geography and proximity to wilderness areas attracts bears and other predators into the community (along with urban deer – who find safe harbour). The schools in Princeton were set up with the Wildlife Alert reporting program WARP. Savanna attended the local farmers market, conducted door-to-door campaigns in hot spot neighbourhoods and actively worked on a Wildlife Hazard Assessment and Wildlife Conflict Management Plan for Princeton throughout the duration of her contract. Savanna also assisted the town of Princeton in monthly deer counts. Savanna dedicated ~39% of her time to Princeton.



Photo Taken by Steve Brodie

Figure 3. Princeton Deer counts, market and a photo of the urban deer

Summerland

Savanna set up the elementary and middle school with the Wildlife alert reporting program WARP to ensure the schools were aware of wildlife sightings in Summerland. Savanna performed door-to-door canvassing in the hot spot areas of Summerland, both as directed by concerned citizen calls and the BC Conservation Officer Services. She also attended markets and local events. Summerland is the next target for a more robust campaign in 2017. Summerland consistently has issues with garbage to the curb early, lack of vigilant maintenance of residential fruit trees and an unfenced landfill. Also, several creek corridors running in close proximity to urban areas, and contribute to the potential human-wildlife conflict issues.

WARP

The Wildlife Alert Reporting program was set up at several schools within the regional district.

- Vermillion Forks –Princeton
- John Allison-Princeton
- Cawston Elementary
- Summerland Middle school
- Giants Head Elementary- Summerland
- Carmi Elementary- Penticton
- KVR Middle school-Penticton
- Skaha Lake Middle school-Penticton
- Queens Park Elementary
- Okanagan Falls Elementary
- Kaleden Elementary school
- Columbia Elementary-Penticton

Presentations

Presentations were updated and honed for a wide range of audiences this season; to provide insight into the reasons human-wildlife conflict occurs and what we can do to reduce it. Presentations were given to kindergarten children through to mature adults. RDOS WildSafeBC provided presentations (or demonstrations) to the following total audience of 560 people this season:

- BC Wine Grape Council Conference – July 19 - bear safety training (Zoe and Savanna)
- Okanagan Falls Library Summer reading club presentation- July 12th (Savanna)
- Kaleden Library Summer reading club presentation - July 20th (Savanna)
- Osoyoos Library Summer reading club presentation- July 26th (Savanna)
- Keremeos Library Summer reading club presentation- August 5th (Savanna)
- SPCA “Kids Camp” presentation- July 11th, July 26th, Aug. 2nd and Aug 9th. (Savanna)
- Summerland Brownies – Feb 2016 (Zoe)
- 2nd Penticton Scouts, Penticton Adventurers, Girl Guides and Beavers – Feb 2016 (Zoe)
- Uplands Elementary – Jan 2016 (Zoe)
- Naramata Elementary – Oct 2016 (Zoe)

Examples of RDOS WildSafeBC Outreach



Figure 4. RDOS WildSafeBC library talks with the summer reading clubs



Figure 5. SPCA kids talks and bear spray training at the BC wine and grape convention

Important note: Each spring, the RDOS WildSafeBC Program conducts safety training and safe deployment of bear spray and deterrents to all the outside workers at the RDOS, Okanagan and Similkameen Invasive Species Society and the Summerland Development and Research Centre.

Displays

Educational displays at local events prove to be an effective part of the program's delivery. The display is continuously being updated with materials and was once again a big hit with the public. An interesting display is always a great place to begin a discussion on local wildlife issues with residents. People share their stories and are able to access information and obtain solutions for their own attractant management challenges. WildSafeBC spent 10 days and interacted with over 400 people at the following local events:

- Summerland Market-2 (Savanna)
- Penticton Market- 2 (Savanna, Zoe and Frank)
- Naramata Market-1 (Savanna and Zoe)
- Princeton Market- 2 (Savanna)
- Summerland Ornamental Gardens 100 year anniversary- 1(Savanna and Zoe)
- BC Wine Grape Council Conference – July (2 days) (Savanna and Zoe)



If you could open the cart, you could pick a prize from inside

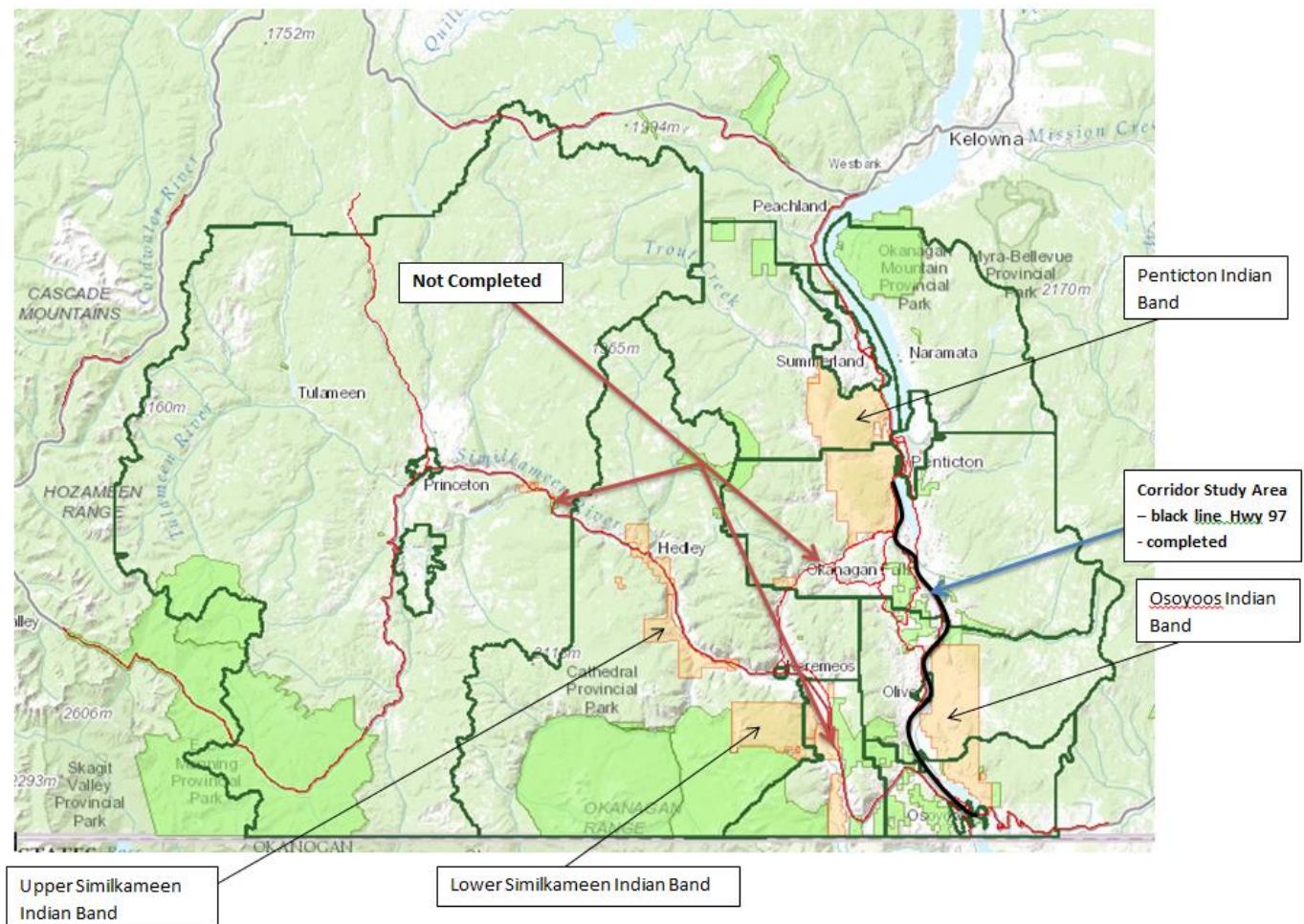
Figure 6. Event displays and “ R U smarter Than The Average Bear?” try to get the lid open on the bear proof container – for a prize at the BC Wine Grape Council Conference display

Wildlife Corridor Conflict Mapping

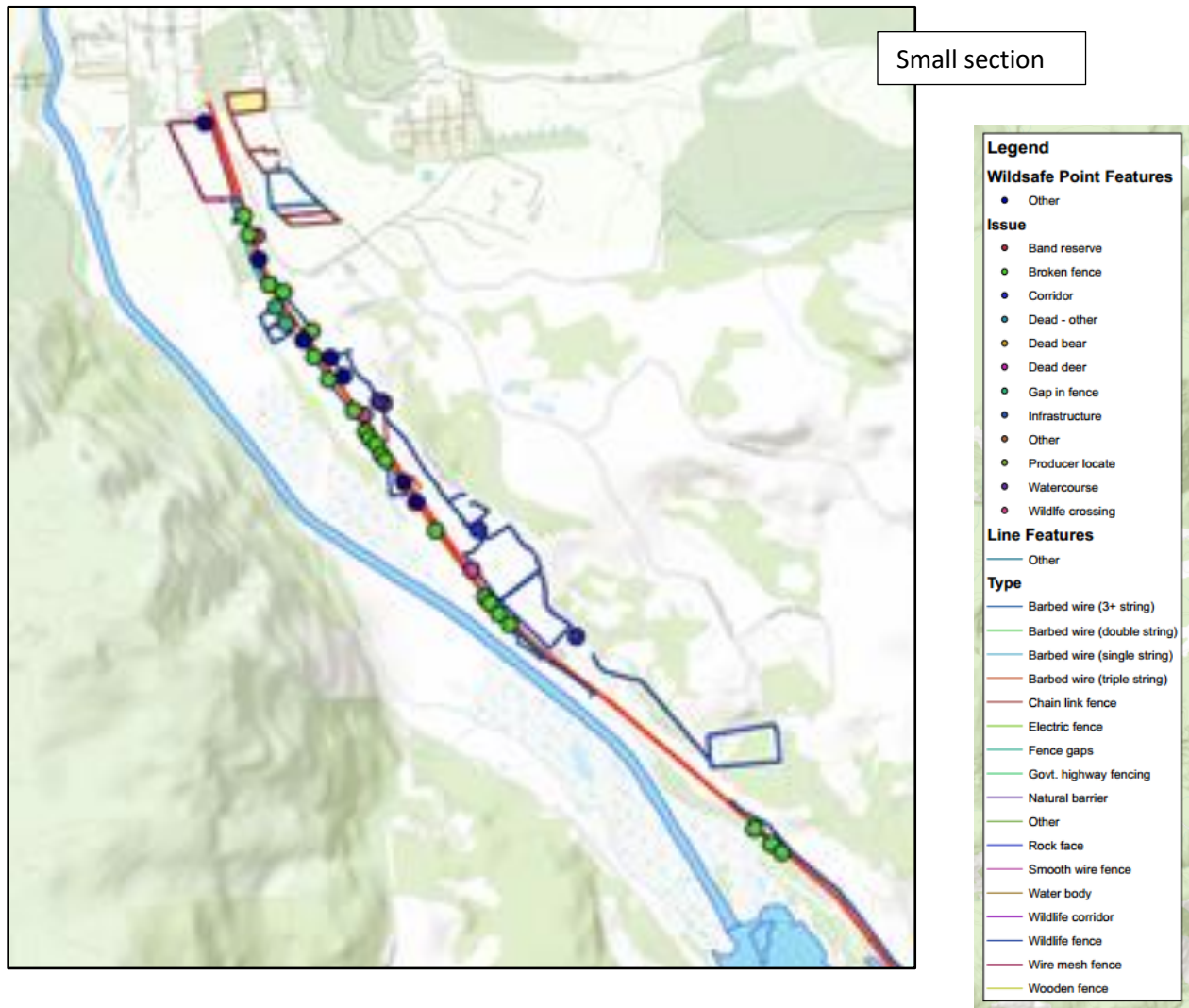
During the summer, Savanna used a tablet loaded with RDOS ArcGIS and began mapping the highway corridor along Hwy 97. She inventoried the different types of barriers to safe wildlife crossings which included but wasn't limited to fencing types and lengths, natural and un-natural barriers, creeks, worn paths and carnage points.

This baseline study is to be used to apply for funding towards a more complete study with recommendations for reducing the risk of conflicts along our busy highway corridors.

Overview of Study Area in relation to RDOS



Wildlife Corridor Conflict Mapping (continued)



Challenges of the 2016 Season

- Funding shortfalls are a constant challenge. As the RDOS WildSafeBC Program has matured and become imbedded in the region, the calls and expectations from the public have also increased. The program receives calls and requests throughout the year, yet the funding is based on a May to November format – contingent on BC Conservation Foundation partnered funding.
- Technological issues (deficiencies) with the tablet hampered Savanna's ability to complete Hwy wildlife barrier mapping inventories. This was the first year that the tablet was used for WildSafeBC mapping. The results that were obtained were excellent and we hope to continue this in 2017 with more robust equipment.
- In 2016, changes made by Canada Summer Jobs Program reduced the number of weeks eligible from 14 to 9. This reduction required WildSafeBC, The RDOS, and the Town of Princeton to source and secure additional resources in order to run a minimal summer program that would be of benefit to the RDOS and the communities it serves.

Goals for 2017

Looking forward to 2017, RDOS WildSafeBC hopes to continue to collaborate with community partners to 'Keep wildlife wild and communities safe'.

- Work with other partners to increase the overall budget of the RDOS WildSafeBC program
- Monitor Princeton following up on the Hazard and Management Plans
- Continue work towards the community of Princeton becoming Bear Smart
- Provide a more robust program in Summerland
- Work towards the community of Kaleden in Electoral Area D becoming Bear Smart
- Continue to assist with the urban and agricultural deer issues
- Continue to offer educational presentations to a wide range of audiences, integrating new materials and timely 'angles' keeping the message consistent but 'fresh'

Acknowledgements

RDOS WildSafeBC is grateful for the generous support the program receives from its sponsors, partners and volunteers. Thanks to our sponsors: The RDOS, The Town of Princeton, the Ministry of Environment, and British Columbia Conservation Foundation. A sincere thank you to the BC Conservation Officer Service and specifically Inspector Barb Leslie and Insp. Toby Sprado, Sgt. Jim Beck, and staff; WSBC BCCF Provincial Coordinator Frank Ritcey, Jen Bellhouse, and staff; fellow mentors across the Province.



Figure 7. 2nd Penticton Scouts, Summerland Brownies and Uplands Elementary

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